

STATEMENTS FROM CER (Construction Énergie Renouvelable)

GENERAL CONTRACTOR HIRED TO BUILD HENVEY INLET WIND

NOVEMBER 27, 2018

CBC reply email to CER

Mr. Ebrahimipour,

Thank you for the email.

Both C.E.R. and Pattern Energy Group LP have been very clear asserting there was no drilling or blasting in the area of the fire that began on July 18.

Please rest assured, CBC is not preparing to report that blasting or drilling was the cause of Parry Sound 33.

However, I am interested in the fires at the site before July 18, and C.E.R.'s general fire safety and environmental practices and compliance.

CBC has gathered evidence of a number of previous fires.

We've also obtained video footage showing a number of blasting sessions on the site with heavy debris and "rock fly" above the tree canopy, ripping through the forest, and some landing in nearby lakes.

CBC has shown these videos to a number of experts who, after reviewing the videos, believe you were either "shooting open" without any blasting mats - or, you were using insufficient blasting mats to control the debris as required under the HIW environmental assessment and the Henvey Inlet First Nation environmental permit for the project.

Thus, my questions.

I'd ask you to re-read them below and explain the fires pre-july 18th.

Also.:

Were any of the "pre-July 18" fires caused by/related to blasting activities?

(Workers from the site tell CBC news that some were.).

Here are the questions I'd ask you to answer, again, pasted her for ease:

>>>9. How many small fires did C.E.R. and/or its subconctractors extinguish at the HIW site in the weeks prior to July 18, 2018?

10. What were the dates and causes of each of those fires?

11. Did C.E.R. report these fires to MNRF? (If not, why not?)

12. Witnesses we've talked to {tell} CBC about these fires (prior to July 18) and the practices of crews working at the site in the months prior telling CBC News that blasting of rock continued during the extreme fire hazard conditions without the use of adequate blasting

mats. What does C.E.R. say about this and the risks posed by this kind of practice?

CBC News has obtained a number of videos of blasting at the site from this summer. We've shown these videos to blasting experts (including one working on your project). They all agree the level of debris seen flying above the forest canopy and into the lakes is indicative of either no blasting mats - or insufficient coverage.

What do you say to this?

DS

CER email to CBC

Good morning Mr. Seglins,

I appreciate your email, however your line of questioning suggests that blasting and drilling were the direct cause of the fire when the fact is that there was no blasting, drilling or high-risk activities happening at the relevant area of the construction site at the time the fire occurred. I have confirmed this with you previously and you have refused to acknowledge this fact thus far. It is inaccurate to run a story suggesting that this caused the fire when this has already been ruled out.

CER has followed the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry protocols for our operations, including incident reporting.

Sincerely,

Mehdi Ebrahimipour
Project Director

NOVEMBER 24, 2018

CBC reply email to CER

Mr. Ebrahimipour and Mr. Minville,

While I am grateful for your brief response, you have failed to address many of my questions. Specifically, about how many fires occurred on the site prior to July 18th's major fire. Importantly, you have also not addressed questions about the use of adequate blasting mats on the project (as identified in the AECOM Environmental Assessment and required under the Henvey Inlet First Nation Environmental Permit granted in February 28, 2016).

Again, here are the questions you've not addressed at all:

9. How many small fires did C.E.R. and/or its subconctractors extinguish at the HIW site in the weeks prior to July 18, 2018?

10. What were the dates and causes of each of those fires?

11. Did C.E.R. report these fires to MNRF? (If not, why not?)

12. Witnesses we've talked to {tell} CBC about these fires (prior to July 18) and the practices of crews working at the site in the months prior telling CBC News that blasting of rock continued during the extreme fire hazard conditions without the use of adequate blasting mats. What does C.E.R. say about this and the risks posed by this kind of practice?

CBC News has obtained a number of videos of blasting at the site from this summer. We've shown these videos to blasting experts (including one working on your project). They all agree the level of debris seen flying above the forest canopy and into the lakes is indicative of either no blasting mats - or insufficient coverage.

What do you say to this?

Please be aware, CBC is preparing to publish our stories about these issues in the coming days. I require a response from you no later than Tuesday November 27th at noon to be included in those initial stories. Otherwise, I will take it that your company is refusing to discuss these questions.

Thanks,
DS

CER email to CBC News

As mentioned previously, CER is the prime contractor for the Henvey Inlet Wind project. CER takes this role seriously, and we operate in compliance of all safety and operating protocols put forth in the Industrial Operations Protocol (IOP).

These protocols were carefully developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) and all CER safety plans for the Henvey Inlet Wind project were created in direct accordance with these very important guidelines. These guidelines provide measures to permit construction activities despite dry conditions and such work is not considered unusual or outside the norm. CER has performed several large projects over the last 10 years in Canada in similar forested environment.

It is important to note that there was no blasting, drilling, or other high-fire risk activities taking place by CER staff or its subcontractors in the vicinity of the presumed start of the fire at the time that it began.

Mehdi Ebrahimipour
Project Director

NOVEMBER 16, 2018

CBC email to CER's Mehdi Ebrahimipour (Ontario) and Eric Minville (Quebec)

Mr. Ebrahimipour and Mr. Minville,

As I've explained to Mr. Ebrahimipour over the telephone, CBC news is preparing some news stories about this summer's Parry Sound 33 forest fire, and how it began.

I'm hoping that someone from CER would be willing to do an on-camera interview next week to answer a series of questions.

In the alternative, below are a series of questions which I'd ask for a reply no later than 5 PM Friday November 23.

1. What is your understanding of the cause of Parry Sound 33?
2. How many smaller fires did work crews extinguish in the weeks prior to the big fire (June 15 - July 18)?
3. How many were reported to MNRF?
4. Why did construction in the bush in mid July continue (including operation of off-road work vehicles, blasting, heavy equipment, rock and forest clearing) despite the region-wide fire bans, extreme fire hazard conditions and the daily "Fire Intensity Codes" issued by Ontario's MNRF which indicated "Very High Hazard Level" for industry in the bush?
5. CBC News has obtained videos of blasting activities at the HIW construction site where large quantities of rock and shrapnel are seen flying in the sky, lakes and ricocheting through the forest. Three different industry experts who have reviewed these videos for us indicate the debris from the explosions is evidence of blasting without sufficient rubber blasting mats.

Why was blasting allowed without sufficient mats at the HIW site?

6. How is blasting in this manner consistent with the environmental mitigation but in place to minimize impact of this project on local wild life and endangered species?
7. How many of the fires prior to PS 33 are attributable to blasting at the site?
8. How many of the fires prior to PS 33 are attributed to other construction activities (including sparks from operation of heavy machinery on the rocks)?
9. CBC News has conducted an interview with a former employee of Gervais Forestry (subcontractor to CER / Pattern) who says he believes the HIW work site should have been shut down given the numerous fires caused by construction and the extreme conditions. He also says he was threatened by his employer (Gervais), warned of potential lawsuits from Pattern, and was ultimately dismissed for expressing on Twitter that crews were taking unreasonable and unsafe risks at the site given the fire hazard.

What role did CER have in the dismissal of Wayne Hollis from Gervais Forestry?

10. What is CER's response to claims by Hollis he was fired for speaking out about the cause of Parry Sound 33 (something Pattern Energy, in a public statement, encouraged of contractor and employee witnesses with information about the causes)?
11. What responsibility does CER have to compensate Ontario tax payers for the millions of dollars spent suppressing this fire which destroyed nearly 12, 000 hectares of land on both Henvey Inlet FN and French River provincial park?

If you are interested in answering these questions in an on camera interview, please be in touch ASAP to arrange.

Otherwise, I ask you provide a written reply by 5 PM Friday November 23.

Please confirm you receive this. Happy to chat to discuss or clarify
Sincerely,

DS

AUGUST 27, 2018

Email from CER to CBC

Hi Mr. Seglins,

CER is a consortium of 3 companies that specializes in renewable projects. To date CER has completed significant work on more than 15 renewable projects in Canada totalling more than 1500 MW.

CER is the prime contractor for the Henvey Inlet Wind project.

CER is working with local subcontractors to perform the construction of access roads, turbine foundations, work areas for turbine assembly, turbine assembly, electrical collector system and electrical substations.

CER takes this role seriously and operates in compliance of all safety and operating protocols put forth in the Industrial Operations Protocol (IOP). These protocols were carefully developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) and CER safety plans for the Henvey Inlet Wind project were created in direct accordance with these very important guidelines.

CER requires its personnel and subcontractors to have the sufficient personnel trained and have equipment on site as per operating protocols put forth in the Industrial Operations Protocol (IOP). Subcontractors are also required to follow CER's fire prevention and preparedness plan to insure compliance of safety and operating protocols put forth in the IOP.

CER has and will continue to work closely with the MNRF and, as the primary contractor onsite, we have worked with them to develop a deliberately measured approach to re-starting our work on this project.

CER is also working closely with the MNRF to seek input and direction on how we can go above and beyond the mandated measures we have already incorporated onsite.

It is important to note that there was no blasting, drilling, or other high-fire risk activities taking place by CER staff or its subcontractors in the vicinity of the MNRF presumed start of the fire at the time that it began.

As you are aware, the MNRF is still determining the cause of the fire and CER is assisting wherever possible.

Have a good week sir.

Mehdi Ebrahimipour
Project Director
160 George Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, ON K1N 9M2



AUGUST 17, 2018

Email from CER to CBC

Good afternoon Mr. Seglins,

Thank you for sending the questions. I'll speak with our team to compile the answers for you. I noticed you need the answers by Thursday next week. I'm not available all next week due to personal matters. Would it be possible to send you the response by early to mid, the following week? I apologize for the inconvenience.

Thanks.

Mehdi Ebrahimipour

AUGUST 17, 2018

CBC email to CER

Mr. Ebrahimipour,

Thanks for the reply.

I'm a journalist with CBC looking into issues around the Henvey Inlet Wind development and the Parry Sound 33 forest fire.

I fully appreciate there is a MNRF investigation into the causes of the fire that began on July 18, 2018 at the site.

Respecting that process, my questions relate to issues preceding July 18. I am hoping you can help CBC better understand C.E.R.'s role in the overall construction of the project and issues around fire prevention and safety at the site.

1. What is C.E.R.? (Who are the partners that make up this company)?
2. What is C.E.R.'s role on the Henvey Inlet Wind project?
3. What is the range of work that C.E.R. is doing and/or overseeing at the site?
4. Who are the main contractors doing each facet of the work?

5. What Fire Prevention and Preparedness plans did C.E.R. have in place prior to July 18, 2018?
6. What did C.E.R. require of its subcontractors in terms of Fire Prevention and Preparedness, prior to July 18, 2018?
7. Why did blasting, drilling, grubbing and scraping of rock at HIW project continue despite the elevated risk for forest fires in the region prior to July 18, 2018?
8. Under the Forest Fires Prevention Act, Sec 18(6), the activities of using heavy machinery to scrape rock, and blasting, are classified as either "very high risk" or "high risk" industrial activities. What steps did C.E.R. take to mitigate the forest fire risks of these specific activities during the extreme forest fire conditions prior to July 18, 2018?
9. How many small fires did C.E.R. and/or its subcontractors extinguish at the HIW site in the weeks prior to July 18, 2018?
10. What were the dates and causes of each of those fires?
11. Did C.E.R. report these fires to MNRF? (If not, why not?)
12. Witnesses we've talked to CBC about these fires (prior to July 18) and the practices of crews working at the site in the months prior telling CBC News that blasting of rock continued during the extreme fire hazard conditions without the use of adequate blasting mats. What does C.E.R. say about this and the risks posed by this kind of practice?
13. What actions has C.E.R. taken to investigate the causes of PS 33?
14. What actions has C.E.R. taken against any of its contractors or employees in relation to PS 33?

While everyone awaits the findings of the MNRF forest fire investigation to determine the cause of the July 18, 2018 fire that became Parry Sound 33 ... CBC is conducting its own investigation.

We ask that C.E.R. answer the questions above, and to offer any additional insights that you think CBC should be aware of. Outside the questions above, I'd also be open to speaking on background about certain matters if you'd prefer.

Please let me know that you receive this.

I am hoping you could provide a reply no later than Thursday of next week.

Thanks,

DS

AUGUST 16, 2018

CER email to CBC

Hi Dave,

Please send your questions and we'll do our best to answer them.

Have a good day.

Mehdi Ebrahimipour
Project Director

AUGUST 15, 2018

CBC email to CER

Mr. Ebrahimipour,

I'm a journalist with CBC News based in Toronto, preparing some stories about issues involving the Henvey Inlet Wind project.

I have some questions specifically for C.E.R.

To whom should I be sending my questions?

Sincerely,

DS